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*Yellow fever at Orizaba in September, 1902—Transmission by mosquitoes.*

[Translated abstract of the report rendered by the medical commission appointed by the government of the State of Vera Cruz to investigate the sanitary condition of the cities of Cordoba and Orizaba.]

Consul Canada transmits the following from Vera Cruz, January 17:

In view of the many alarming reports concerning the sanitary conditions of the cities of Cordoba and Orizaba, State of Vera Cruz, during the latter part of the month of September, 1902, the government of the State of Vera Cruz took measures to procure exact and reliable information regarding the same by appointing Drs. Henry Herrera and Charles Emanuel Garcia, and charging them with making a thorough investigation and to report on the results obtained.

The report submitted by these gentlemen states that the disease was prevalent in 2 wards of the city of Orizaba, and that the local authorities had already taken vigorous measures to prevent the spread of the disease by a system of isolating the patients.

The infected districts are situated some distance from Cocolapam, a point where the same disease appeared two years ago for the first time. A great number of poor people were found ill and lacking proper medical assistance. This was rendered and the opportunity improved for making exhaustive observations under most favorable conditions. After having made a thorough examination of 20 cases, the physicians arrived at the unanimous conclusion that the disease was unmistakably yellow fever. Their labors at Orizaba having been concluded, the commission reported the results by wire to the State government, which thereupon directed that the report be submitted for discussion to the sanitary board of Orizaba, with Drs. Diaz, Labartini, and Gomez Izquierdo, in conjunction with the other members of the board. The report as presented by the commission was adopted and indorsed by all but one of the physicians present, who maintained that the disease was simply "paludismo grave" (severe paludism). The discussion was thereupon closed.

Dr. N. del Rio is of the opinion that the fever was transplanted to that point by mosquitoes, carried in railway trains from Vera Cruz; that, although yellow fever patients and mosquitoes have heretofore come to Orizaba at all times, up to three years ago the disease had never appeared in its present epidemic form in that city; that the small portion of the city of Orizaba infected presented all the necessary conditions favorable to the propagation of all infectious diseases, which opinion was undeniable. In a large section of the city the water used for domestic purposes is stored in barrels and other vessels, thus creating breeding places for the "stegomyia;" the floors of the tenements being of earth, much of the waste water and filth is absorbed by the same, garbage and all waste matter being simply thrown into the streets.

At a second meeting of the sanitary board, the commission of medical men, including Drs. del Rio, Labartini, and Alfaro, were present. It was agreed that a strict and rigorous system of isolation was necessary, and that the same be strongly recommended; that in the hospitals special departments should be provided for those who could not be conveniently isolated at their homes, the sexes to be kept apart. All affected persons to be retained within the infected district and a strict and vigorous system of disinfection and destruction of the larva of the mosquitoes to be inaugurated at once, the work to be performed simultaneously at all points of the city, by and under competent direction.

Wire screens are strongly recommended for isolating the patients, and they should be furnished by the city government. The medical men of the place to be officially notified of the penalties to be imposed for non-compliance with these regulations; also, that a copy of the sanitary laws be distributed among the inhabitants.

The results of the labors of the commission may be summed up as follows: That yellow fever actually exists in an epidemic form in 2 wards of the city of Orizaba; that the disease was primarily imported; that it is possible to prevent the extension and spread of the same by stringent and rigorous measures; that it is possible to eradicate the infection centers, by the isolation of the patients, the destruction of the mosquitoes, and the observance of sanitary rules.

The modern treatment adopted with such excellent results at Havana, Cuba, New Orleans, and Sierra Leone, and with great and well-founded hopes of complete success at Vera Cruz, should be applied to all that zone exposed to yellow fever, and that this treatment may not prove barren of good results, it is absolutely necessary that the sanitary condition of the entire city be improved. It will be remembered that, although only a part of the hygienic measures adopted at Cocolapam district were in force during the epidemic, that place has not become infected, though two years ago it was a hotbed of the disease. To remedy the evil at Orizaba, 3 things are absolutely indispensable—abundance of good potable water in all localities, a good system of drainage, and a thorough and systematic cleaning of the district occupied by the poorer classes of the people.

The commission also visited the city of Cordoba on October 28, when an examination of the city hospital and the hospital of the railway company was made. In the first-mentioned place no arrangements were provided for the isolation of yellow fever patients, but in the latter we observed that the entire structure had been provided with wire screens, at considerable expense, unfortunately ineffective, owing to the size of the mesh of the wire cloth. The commission recommended that the screens be painted with a thick coat of white lead to close up the meshes.

At the meeting of the board of health of Cordoba, it was unanimously agreed to recommend for Cordoba the same measures adopted at Orizaba, and the commission, after making such investigations as were possible with the limited assistance found at Cordoba, arrived at the following conclusions: That, properly speaking, yellow fever does not exist epidemically at the city of Cordoba, though in all likelihood there have been some sporadic cases of the disease. There was at least 1 case of yellow fever on September 30, contracted at that place, for the patient had not been outside of the city limits for two months previous to his being attacked. The form in which the fever has shown itself in Cordoba this year is attributed to climatic conditions, the nature of which is unknown to us.

#### PORTO RICO.

Assistant Surgeon King, chief quarantine officer for Porto Rico, reports, January 24, the partial disinfection of the U. S. collier *Arethusa* on account of tuberculosis at San Juan.

#### *Sanitary condition of Ponce—A case of leprosy.*

Assistant Surgeon Goldberger reports, January 26, a case of leprosy at Ponce. For the week ended January 23, 32 deaths were reported in the district of Ponce. The health and sanitary condition of the port continue fairly good.